

THOMAS ELLWOOD.

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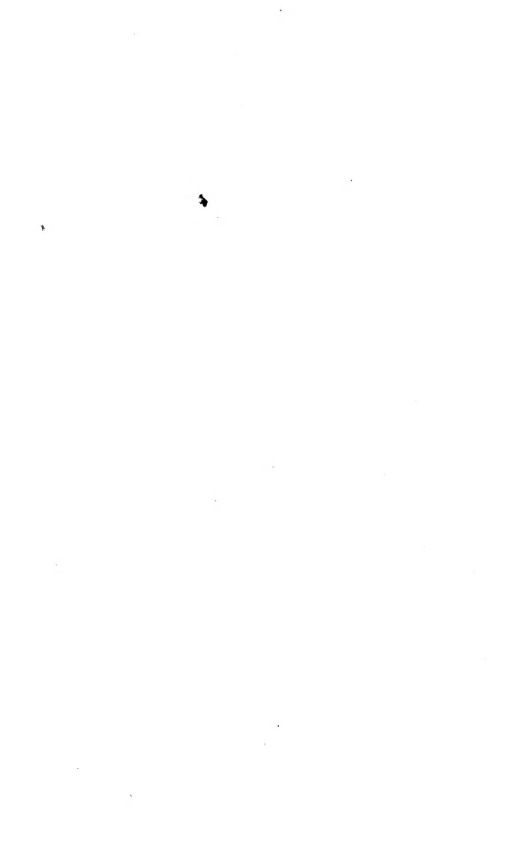


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THE
STORY
OF
THOMAS ELLWOOD.

BY
A. S. P.

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The Story of Thomas Ellwood.

Thomas Ellwood was the younger son of a man named Walter Ellwood. The Ellwood family had once been rich ; but, owing to many causes, had become poorer and poorer, until the grandfather of Thomas Ellwood and the father of Walter retrieved the fallen condition of the family by marrying the only child of Walter Gray, whose name and whose estate passed into the possession of Walter Ellwood.

Perhaps you do not know that, in England, it is the custom for the eldest son of a family to have all the money and lands, left by the father when he dies. The oldest brother may spend his time in luxury and idleness, while the others are obliged to work very hard, sometimes, to procure themselves the means of living, even without much comfort. The sisters have small legacies left to them, or are left dependent upon the generosity of their brothers. In many families, it is not considered gentlemanly to work,

and so they put the younger sons into the army, to kill or be killed ; or into the navy, where too they are expected to fight ; or perhaps they oblige them to study law or physic ; or, worse than all, to study how they may make money by preaching, which is contrary to the teaching of Jesus, for he said, "freely have you received, freely give?"

Thus it was at the time Thomas Ellwood lived, and thus it is even now in England. Ought we not to rejoice that our own lot is cast in a land so different?

Thomas Ellwood was, as I have said, the younger son of an Englishman. He was born in the year sixteen hundred and thirty-nine, rather more than two hundred years ago. When he was about two years old, he was taken to London, where his father resided for some years. It was at the time of civil war. A civil war means, a war carried on in a country between its own people, where neighbor fights against neighbor, a man against the companion whose hand he had clasped in friendship a month before—brother against brother, and father against son. All wars are dreadful ; but these are the most dreadful.

At such a period as this Thomas Ellwood lived. The king and the parliament were opposed to each other—each with an army. The parliamentary forces overcoming those of the king, reduced him to submission. He was seized and beheaded; his party was enraged, and the whole country bathed in blood. The priests and preachers, instead of telling the people how wicked they were, encouraged them on both sides. On both sides they prayed for victory, and besought the Lord to look down upon their efforts, to bring ruin upon the enemy: forgetting that He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and forgetting all that the meek and lowly Jesus ever taught. Alas! it pains me to tell you of the wickedness which existed in England, when the Society of Friends first arose; but you cannot appreciate the beauty and true nobleness of their characters and actions, unless you see the adverse circumstances by which they were surrounded. Walter Ellwood was not a Friend: he belonged to the parliamentary side, and took his family to London to be protected.

Here he became acquainted with Lady Springett, the widow of William Springett, who died

in the service of the parliament. Lady Springett had a little daughter, named Gulielma, with whom Thomas Ellwood spent a great deal of his time. They used to play together, and ride together in a little coach which her footman would draw about. This is particularly mentioned, because the renewal of his acquaintance with her was the means of his being led towards Friends.

While living in London, the elder brother was boarded at a private school, but afterwards, when the family went to their own home, both he and Thomas were sent to a school about three miles off. Thomas learned very fast indeed; yet he was often whipped, for he was a very mischievous little boy; and it took him such a little while to get his lessons, that his hands would often get him into trouble. He often played tricks upon the others, so that he would be whipped two or three times in a single day. Thomas never complained of this. But there are, I think, many other better ways of teaching children to be good. Thomas learned his lessons so fast and so well, that he probably would have made a very good scholar, if he had had the proper opportunity. But Walter Ellwood's family being a very expensive one, he thought he could not afford Thomas

the advantages of a higher school ; particularly as the older brother was removed to college, where he was entered as a fellow-commoner, and as such expected to spend a great deal of money. This was acting upon the principle already mentioned, that the younger brother should give place in every respect to the older.

After leaving school, Thomas paid but little attention to his books ; until after a while he was afraid to read aloud, lest he should make some mistake in the pronunciation of a word. He had a great deal of wit and good sense, which enabled him to make himself agreeable to those with whom he associated, and which often drew him into company.

In this way he lived until he was about eighteen years of age, not doing any thing worse than wasting his time, as other young men did. One day he was out riding with his father, and they intended going to a neighboring town ; but the coachman, seeing a nearer and better way than the one generally used, turned into it. It ran through a field of grain, but was quite wide enough for the carriage to pass without injuring it. There was a man ploughing not far off ; he ran to them ; and, stopping the coach, poured

forth a shower of reproaches. Walter Ellwood mildly answered, that if any one was to blame, it was not him, but the driver, who turned in that way without asking anything about it: but he told the man that he might come into town, and he would pay him, if there was any damage done. When they arrived in town, they were told it was very often used as a road, but the common road was close by, and pretty good too; so they concluded to return by the latter. It was late in the evening when they started, and very dark. The man who had troubled them in the morning got another man to join him, to waylay them; expecting they would take the same road home. But when they found this was not the case, they ran across, and catching hold of the horses' bridles, would not let them go forward. Walter called out to the coachman, asking him why he did not go on. He answered there were two men at the horses' heads. Walter instantly opened the coach door, and, stepping out, expostulated with the men, who were armed with cudgels, and seemed bent upon doing mischief. He told them they were in danger from the law. But, finding what he said of no effect, he turned to his son who had followed him out of the car-

riage, saying, "Tom, disarm them." In those days it was the fashion for all those called gentlemen to wear swords. Accordingly Thomas drew his, and made a pass at the one next him; but the bright blade frightened the cudgel-bearer who at once slipped aside, and ran off for safety; while his companion, too much terrified to stand his ground, fled likewise. Thomas followed them, being very much enraged at their insolence; but he could not come up with them, and then concluded they must have taken shelter under some bush. He ran so far that in the darkness of the night he could not find his way back, except by shouting to his father, and his father shouting in return.

At the time, and for a good while after, Thomas Ellwood's only regret was, that he had not come up with these men. But after he became acquainted with gospel truths, oh! how thankful he felt that he had been preserved from shedding human blood. For though our sins may be forgiven, yet it is one of the most awful recollections that can attend a man through life, that he has robbed a fellow creature of existence. It is difficult to reconcile a truly feeling man to himself, when he has hurried into the presence

of his Creator one who may be unprepared. All the battles that were ever fought, all the victories ever gained, are not worth the sacrifice of one life. Yet it is a noble deed to venture freely fortune, liberty, honor, and life, in the service of our Creator. He gave them, shall they not be devoted to him? Jesus Christ was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" and when cruel men were about to take his precious life, his words "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," were the fruit of the gospel spirit of peace, and are an example to all future generations. Legions of angels were at his command, yet he submitted to be "led as a lamb to the slaughter." If we follow him, must we not suffer patiently when evil comes upon us? When smitten upon one cheek, must we not turn the other? When reviled, must we not, in obedience to Christ, revile not again?

When these things came before the mind of Thomas Ellwood, his heart was filled with gratitude towards that great Almighty Being who had watched over him, and kept him from committing so great a crime.

It was about a year after this occurrence that Thomas's brother died, and soon after his mother

also. He was very much attached to his mother, and her death probably awakened his first serious impressions. Shortly after he went with his father to visit Lady Springett who had married a second time. Her present husband was Isaac Pennington, and she with him and her daughter Gulielma Springett, had joined the Society of Friends. This the Ellwoods heard on their way to visit them. They were at first amazed with their quiet manners, different from the noisy, trifling gaiety of the upper classes at that day. They, however, felt disappointed of their pleasant visit, but they had no opportunity of asking an explanation, as there were other visitors present. Thomas left the others, intending to renew his acquaintance with Gulielma, his little playfellow of former times; and finding her in the garden with her maid, he addressed her, as was usual in that day, with extravagant compliments. But though she treated him with politeness, there was so much quiet dignity about her, that he felt abashed at his own flippancy, and wanted assurance enough to carry him through; so, asking pardon for his boldness in intruding on her private walks, he withdrew. They stayed to dinner, and then returned home not very much

pleased with their visit, yet uncertain where to find fault.

This visit had one good effect on Walter Ellwood's mind. He was a magistrate, and frequently had Friends brought before him, and complained of, because they would not take oaths as other people did. When he found that his friends, persons for whom he had a great respect, held the same opinions, he felt disposed to deal with them as gently as the law would admit.

A young man who lived in Buckinghamshire, came on First-day to a town called Chinner, not far from the residence of the Ellwoods, having something to say to the minister of that parish. Being somewhat acquainted with the young man, Thomas went to hear him. He stood in the aisle before the pulpit all the time of the sermon, not speaking a word until it was ended; and then spoke a few words to the priest, of which all that Thomas could hear was "That the prayer of the wicked is abomination to the Lord:" and that "God heareth not sinners." He said more than this, however, though Thomas did not hear what it was; but he was interrupted by the officers, who took him before Walter Ellwood. When Thomas found they were going to take him there,

he hastened home to tell his father about it; and mentioned that the man behaved quietly and peaceably, not speaking at all until the minister had done preaching; and then what he said was short, and delivered without any passion or ill language.

Accordingly, the officers soon made their appearance, bringing the man with them, and charging him with making a public disturbance. Walter Ellwood asked them when he spoke? they answered, "when the minister had concluded." He asked, what words he used; this they could not agree in. He then asked if he had used any reviling language, and finding he had not, he dismissed the case, counselling the young man against making any trouble.

In the Tenth month, 1659, the Ellwood family paid another visit to the Penningtons. Walter being desirous of acquainting himself with Friends' principles, they stayed several days; and as a Friends' meeting was appointed in the neighborhood, they were invited to attend, which they did. This meeting was held in a large hall of an old house, which once belonged to a gentleman, but was now used as a farm-house. It was named the Grove. Here were several

Friends, but none spoke except Edward Burrough. Thomas Ellwood was sitting next to him, and drank in his words with avidity, for they not only reached his understanding, but warmed his heart. After the meeting concluded Edward Burrough went home with the Penningtons. The evenings were long; and the servants of the family, being Friends, were called in, and after sitting a while in silence, Edward Burrough spoke again. But Walter Ellwood not agreeing with him, raised some objections. James Naylor, who was there, then took the subject up, and spoke with such a clear understanding of it, that Walter had nothing more to say. James and Edward then gently dropped the argument, and they all withdrew to their respective chambers.

In the morning, Thomas, his father and younger sister prepared to return home: the older one (for he had two) had gone on to London from the Penningtons. All the way, Thomas, who rode behind the coach on horseback, could hear his father and sister conversing pleasantly together, but he could not join with them, for his heart felt sad and very heavy, though he knew not what ailed him. They reached home that

night; and next day Thomas went to hear the minister at Chinner preach; the last time, as he says, he ever went to hear a salaried minister.

He now felt very desirous of attending a Friends' meeting, and got his father's man to inquire if there was any in the neighborhood. He heard of one about seven miles off, which Thomas concluded to attend: but as he did not like to be seen going to a Friends' meeting, he took his greyhound with him, as if he went out coursing.

When he came to the place, and had put his horse up at an inn, he was at a loss where to go; and not wishing to inquire at the inn, he went into the street. Here he had not been long before he saw a man riding up, that he remembered having met at Isaac Pennington's, and followed him, concluding he was going to meeting, as indeed he was. Thomas followed him into the house, and sat down on the first empty chair he came to; some of them looking at him, for he was fashionably dressed, and had his sword by his side. . . . Samuel Thornton, who was present, spoke, and his words were very suitable to Thomas's case, so that he felt as if they were directed to him. When the meeting

was over, he got his horse and hurried home, so that his father might not notice his absence.

This last meeting confirmed the feelings awakened at the first, and he became sensible that he too had a place to fill, an allotted part to perform. His general trouble and confusion beginning to wear off, he saw that though he had mercifully been preserved from many evil things, yet the spirit of the world had hitherto ruled in him, and led him into pride, vanity, superfluity, and flattery. Now he found he must not only abstain from indulgence in these things, but he must bring his very thoughts into subjection; knowing no guiding power save that new law, the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. He felt he must first "cease to do evil," and then "learn to do well."

In those days, such as were called gentlemen dressed in lace, ribbons, buttons, and rings. Their apparel was very gay and very inconvenient; their shoes were made with long points turned up, and fastened to the knee by long ribbons; their clothes were trimmed with lace, their hair worn in long ringlets. These things, in which Thomas had taken much delight, he was now forced to lay aside: not that Friends adopted

any singular costume ; they retained that of the times, merely leaving off those parts which were of no use. The great Creator says, “ give me thy heart,” and if we think we can give him our hearts, and yet give all our attention to the adorning of our persons, we shall find that this is impossible. If our hearts are truly turned towards the Lord, it matters but little how the body is arrayed, so that it is neat, clean and decent. When the earlier Friends first associated together, persecution after persecution rolled upon them like the waves of the sea ; and to minds so engaged as theirs must have been, necessary clothing and necessary food must have been all that was needed.

It is the mark of a mind unused to being filled with more important matter, to be much occupied with this comparatively trivial subject. We sometimes find people who value themselves upon dressing plainly even when they wear costly stuffs. It appears to me that sometimes, when a soul capable of noble things becomes debased by the love of finery, our Creator, willing to test our obedience, requires us to adopt a particular mode in order to convince our own minds which we love best, our own selfish gratification, or

obedience to the intimation revealed to us from above. If we feel so convinced, let us at once endeavor to crush all opposition to his will, being assured it is for our own peace best that we should do so.

But to return to Thomas Ellwood. When he divested himself of his ornaments, which his father took, telling him he would keep them for him until he came to his reason again, he found there was yet more for him to give up—which was his character as a polite gentleman.

It was the fashion to bow, sometimes sinking on one knee, and to use the terms of “my master,” “my lord,” “my dame,” “your servant,” and many others; and he who omitted them was considered as rough and ill-bred. Thomas being no man’s servant, could no longer imply he was, without violating the truth. And these principles made the Friends different in dress and address from any other persuasion whatever. Thomas felt that he could do all that was required of him, except change his manner towards his father: yet he had learned there was one nearer and dearer than even his father, and for his sake he had put his hand to the gospel plough, and should he now turn back?

While his mind was in this state, his father sent him to Oxford to attend to some business for him, and to bring him an account of what was going on there. Thomas felt it almost impossible for him to go, as he should meet with many of his young comrades there. But as he had never resisted his father's will, he could not do so now. So he did not attempt to make any excuse; but ordering his horse to be got ready very early in the morning, he went to bed. Here as he lay upon his pillow there was a great struggle in his breast. He began to think how he should behave in court, and how he should dispatch the business upon which his father sent him. He had been accustomed to meet with many gentlemen there, and to be very merry with them; now he could not pull off his hat,—he could not bow, nor could he address them in the customary manner. He therefore prayed earnestly that he might be preserved through all the temptations of the day, and his mind becoming more easy, he fell asleep.

Next morning he felt calm and quiet, yet afraid he should say something he ought not; for he had been so accustomed to complimentary phrases without any meaning, that it was much

more easy to say them than to remain quiet. As he rode along, he prayed again, "Oh my God, preserve me faithful, whatever may befall me. Suffer me not to be drawn into evil, how much soever scorn and contempt may be cast upon me."

When he arrived at Oxford, he put up his horse, and went directly to the hall where the sessions were held, and had been there but a short time, before a little group of his acquaintance seeing him, came up to speak to him. One of these was a scholar in his gown, another a surgeon of the city, the third a country gentleman whom Thomas had long known. When these came up, they all saluted him in the usual manner, pulling off their hats, bowing and saying "your humble servants, sir," expecting, no doubt, that he would do the same. But when they saw him standing still, moving neither cap nor knee, they looked at each other, much surprised and without speaking. At length the surgeon, who stood near him, clapped his hand upon his shoulder, and smiling, said, "What! Tom a Quaker?" To which he readily and cheerfully answered, "Yes, a Quaker;" and as the words passed from his mouth, he felt great joy spring

up in his heart that he had strength given him to confess himself one of those despised people. They stayed not long, but taking their leave in the same ceremonious manner, departed.

After they were gone, he walked about the hall, and went up nearer the court, to observe what justices were on the bench, and what business they had before them. He went in fear, not of what they would or could do to him, but lest he should be surprised into saying something which he ought not. It was not long before the court adjourned for dinner, and that time Thomas took to go to the clerk of the peace. As soon as he came to the room where he was, the clerk met and saluted him, and though he appeared somewhat startled at Thomas's carriage and behaviour, he made no remark, but behaved very respectfully to him.

After concluding his father's business, he withdrew, intending to return home. But on looking into the street, from the inn where he had left his horse, he saw three justices standing in the way where he was to ride; and this brought a fresh concern upon him. He was pretty sure they would stop him to inquire about his father, and feared they would not let him off. This

doubting led him to contriving how he should go out without being seen, and as he knew the city pretty well, he thought of a back way. Yet this did not seem right, and he stood a good while, hoping the justices would walk off, but they still continued there. At last, he persuaded himself to go the back way, which brought much trouble and grief on him, because he shunned the cross. He then felt willing to yield in all things, except his deportment towards his father, and thought it might be right to make a difference between him and other men in this respect. So when he came home, he went to his father bareheaded, to give him an account of his business, and, behaving as usual, Walter found no fault with him.

Thomas was very desirous of going to meetings, and of visiting Friends; but as he had no horse of his own, and felt unwilling to use his father's, when he knew the latter would object, he thought it would be better to borrow one of an acquaintance, who wished to sell it, or have it kept for its work. Accordingly he dispatched his father's man, to get the horse and bring him over. The next day Thomas concluded to go to Isaac Pennington's, and rising very early, got ready. But thinking it better to

pay all due respect to his father, he sent a person up stairs to tell him where he was going, and to ask if he had any commands. Walter sent down for his son, wishing to see him before he started. So Thomas went up to his father's bed-side, who said, "I understand you have a mind to go to Mr. Pennington's." "I have so," said Thomas. "Why," said the father, "I wonder you should; you were there, you know, only a few days ago. Don't you think it will look oddly?" Thomas answered, that he did not think it would. His father replied, "I doubt you will tire them of your company, and make them think they will be troubled with you." "Oh!" said Thomas, "if I find any thing of that sort, I will make the shorter stay." "But can you propose any sort of business there," said his father, "beyond a mere visit?" "Yes," Thomas replied; he not only proposed to see them, but to have some conversation with them. His father then said in a harsher tone, "I hope you don't incline to be of their way?" "Truly," said Thomas, "I like them and their way very well, so far as I understand it; and am desirous of going to them, that I may understand it better." Thereupon Walter Ellwood began

to reckon up as many faults as possible against the Quakers; telling his son they were a rude, unmannerly people;—that would not give civil respect or honor to their superiors; no, not even to magistrates; and that they held many dangerous principles. To all these charges, Thomas could only reply, they might be misrepresented as the best of men had been. And after a little more conversation, Walter told his son he wished he would not go so soon, but take a little time to consider it, and that he might visit Mr. Pennington's afterwards. "Nay, sir," said his son, "pray don't hinder my going now; for I have so strong a desire to go, that I do not well know how to forbear." As he said these words, he retreated quietly to the chamber-door; then hastening down stairs, he went immediately to the stable, and finding his horse ready, started at once, fearing his father would send him word he must not go.

This discourse detained him a while. The roads being bad, and his horse not very good, it was afternoon before he reached Isaac Pennington's. The servant who came to the door, told Thomas there was a meeting in the house. He hastened in; and, knowing the rooms, went di-

rectly to the little parlor, where the Friends were seated in silence. When the meeting was ended, and those who were strangers had withdrawn, Isaac Pennington and his wife received their guest very courteously; and not knowing he had been under exercise, evinced no unusual cordiality. But when they came to see a change in dress, gesture, speech, and manner, they were exceedingly kind and tender towards him.

Thomas spent that evening with them, conversing very little; but, as he says, feeling great satisfaction in being still and quiet, his spirit being drawn near to the Lord. Before he went to bed, they told him of another meeting to be held the next day, not far from there, which some of the family expected to attend. Of this he was very glad, particularly as it was on his road home. Of this meeting Thomas said, "A very good meeting was this in itself, and to me. Edward Burrough, a noted Friend, and one who afterwards sealed his testimony with his blood, was present and spoke with life and power. Thomas was not only confirmed in his religious views, but some things were opened to his mind which he had not seen clearly before. So true

it is, that as we continue faithful, more and more light is given unto us, even until we come to the perfect day.

Several Friends who were there noticed him as one whom they had met before, and invited him home with them; but Edward Burrough going to Isaac Pennington's drew him thither again. He felt as if it would do him good to ride with Edward, hoping that he would offer him some encouragement in his new path: but he seeing that the right spirit was at work in Thomas's bosom, gave him no opportunity of pouring forth doubts, fears, and questionings. For he was sensible that the guidance of the Good Spirit in ourselves is what we must attend to, and that no man, however capable, can teach us as the Holy Spirit. Edward was naturally of a free and open temper, and afterwards was very familiar and affectionate with Thomas; yet now he thought it right to show him only common kindness.

The next day they parted, Edward for London, and Thomas for his own home, under a great weight and exercise of spirit. He now saw that he had not been clear in his reasonings respecting his father. He saw that the honor due to

parents did not consist in bowing the body or uncovering the head, but in a ready obedience to their lawful commands, and in performing all needful services unto them. So he plainly saw that he could no longer continue his former mode of manifesting respect, without drawing on himself the guilt of wilful disobedience.

On his way home, he was much troubled, for he thought of his father's anger, of the severities which would be heaped upon his head; and then he prayed that he might be preserved through temptation, and enabled to bear all that might be inflicted on him. When he got home he expected a rough reception; but his father was abroad. He sat down in the kitchen, and keeping silence, prayed that the Lord might preserve him from falling.

After some time, he heard the coach drive in, which put him in such a fear that a shivering came over him. But by the time Walter had alighted, and come in, he had somewhat recovered himself. As soon as Thomas saw him, rising and advancing a step or two towards him, and keeping his hat on, he said "Isaac Pennington and his wife remembered their love to thee." Walter Ellwood stopped abruptly, and observing

that his son stood covered before him, and that he used the word "*thee*," with a stern countenance and a tone which indicated great displeasure, said, "I shall talk with you another time," and then hastily walked into the parlor, so that Thomas did not see him again that night. He foresaw there was a storm arising, but the peace he felt in his own mind was more than a recompense, though it grieved him much to offend his hitherto kind parent.

There was to be a meeting next day at Oxford, and Thomas feeling a great desire to attend, ordered his borrowed horse to be got ready early in the morning in order to go to it. He was anxious to consult his father's feelings as much as possible; and after he was ready, desired his sister to go up to his father's chamber, and tell him, that he was going to Oxford, and wished to know if he had any commands. His father sent a message to him not to go until he came down; and getting up immediately he hastened down, partly dressed. When he saw Thomas standing with his hat on, he was so transported with rage that he struck him with both fists, and plucking his hat off, threw it away. Then stepping hastily out to the stable, and seeing

the borrowed horse standing saddled and bridled he inquired whose it was. His man telling him, he said, "Then ride him back and tell Mr. — I desire he will never lend my son his horse again, unless he brings a note from me." The poor fellow, who was fond of his young master, did not like to carry this message, and was disposed to make excuses or delays; but Walter was positive in his commands, and would not let the man eat his breakfast, nor go out of his sight, until he mounted the horse and rode off. Then coming in he went up stairs to finish dressing, thinking his son safe enough at home,—as he was not very fond of walking.

Thomas, seeing the horse go off, understood how matters went; and, being very desirous of going to the meeting, changed his boots for shoes and got another hat. He also told his sister, who loved him dearly, and whom he could trust, where he was going, and, slipping out privately, walked seven long miles to meet some Friends. After he had started, he could not help thinking, that perhaps it was wrong in him thus to steal away from his father, and he stood still a while, not knowing whether to go back or forward. Fear of offending his father would have turned

him back, while the desire to be with Friends impelled him forward. He thought within himself how could that feeling be of the Lord if it induced him to disobey his father? Yet he was conscious that it was not in his own will, nor with the intention to give his father pain. Thus he went on reasoning, until the passage of Scripture—"Children obey your parents *in the Lord*," occurred to him; after which he went on more cheerfully, and was received with great kindness and tenderness by the Friends there.

After Thomas left home, his father, supposing him to have gone up to his chamber, made no inquiry about him till evening. The weather was very cold, and he and his daughter were sitting comfortably together by the fire, when he said to her, "Go up to your brother's chamber, and bring him down; it may be he will sit there else, in a sullen fit, until he has caught cold." "Alas! sir," said she, "he is not in his chamber, nor in the house neither." "Why, where is he then?" said the father, starting up in alarm. "I know not," said she, "where he is, sir; but I know that when he saw you had sent away his horse, he put his shoes on, and went out on foot; and I have not seen him since. And in-

deed, sir, I don't wonder at his going away, considering how you used him." Walter had not foreseen this firmness in one who was wont to obey every intimation of his father's will, and fearing he would never return, he poured forth his lamentations so loudly that the family could hear him. He went to bed immediately, where he passed a restless night, bemoaning himself, and grieving over his son. Next morning, his daughter sent a man to find her brother, and give him this account, entreating him to return home as soon as possible ; yet in case he should not return, she sent fresh linen for his use.

Thomas was very sorry for his father's uneasiness, and would have returned home that evening after meeting ; but the Friends persuaded him to stay, saying, the meeting would probably end late, and that the days were short, and the road long and muddy. Besides which, one of the Friends there promised to go home with him and talk with his father. This was doubtless intended in kindness to Thomas, but it appears to have been ill judged.

The next day Thomas went home, accompanied by this Friend ; and as they drew near the place, they planned that Thomas should go in the back

way, and seat himself in the kitchen ; while the Friend should desire to see his father, and take that opportunity of expostulating with him. When Walter Ellwood heard that some one desired to speak with him, he went into the hall, and was much surprised at finding a Quaker waiting for him there. Yet not knowing on what account he came, he stayed to hear his business ; and when he found it concerned his own son, he fell on him very sharply, probably considering it a piece of great impertinence in a person who had been instrumental in misleading his son, to offer him any advice respecting his treatment of that son. Turning away from the Friend, he went into the kitchen, and there found Thomas standing with his hat on his head. Heated with his conversation, he seemed to forget that this was the son over whom he had so lately mourned as lost ; and his grief turning to anger, he could not contain it, but running passionately towards him, he snatched off his hat and threw it away ; then striking him on the head he ordered him to go up to his own chamber. Thomas obeyed, and his father followed him, giving him a blow every few steps ; as he went through the hall, the Friend who came with

him, could see how little his untimely interference between father and son had mended matters.

Was it not strange that Walter Ellwood should become so enraged at his son, merely because he kept his hat on before him? But this shows that in those days men had made an idol of that kind of respect, rendering it incumbent upon Friends to bear a faithful testimony against it, by suffering fines, imprisonments, and cruel beatings, rather than bow down to this idol. Any one thing upon which we improperly set our hearts, becomes an idol to us. If we love and value it, more than we do our Creator, we worship it. This we must not do, or we become as blinded as the poor heathen, who "bow down to wood or stone." Any feeling of pride, or vanity, or self-importance, which stands between us and our Creator, has become an idol, and we are bound to destroy that feeling, or reduce it to subjection.

Many, very many children and grown people, who call themselves Christians, would find they had idols, if they would strictly examine their own hearts.

It does not appear to me, to be of any great consequence in itself, whether a man pulled his

hat off merely by way of salutation or not. But when the custom had grown to be an idol, it was of great consequence to break it. We ought to respect and venerate those persons who suffered so much upon this account.

Walter Ellwood was so determined that his son should not wear his hat in his presence, that after snatching it off his head, he would not give it to him again, but put it aside where it would not be found. Thomas then put on another hat, which his father soon tore violently from him; so that he found himself obliged to go bareheaded, for the want of hat or cap. This occurred in the eleventh month; and the weather being very severe, he caught a heavy cold, so that his head and face swelled very much, and his gums became so sore that he could put nothing in his mouth but liquids. His kind sister waited on him, and did every thing she could for his relief, but his father did not seem to feel much pity for him.

Thomas Ellwood was very much of a prisoner that winter; for he could not go about the country without a hat, and his father took care he should not have the means of getting one. So he spent the time in his chamber, reading the

Bible, and silently waiting on the Lord. Doubtless it was excellently spent in learning to bear the cross.

Whenever he had occasion to speak to his father, he offended him by saying "*thee*" or "*thou*." At one of these times, after beating him, and commanding him to go to his chamber, which he usually did when affronted at him, Walter followed him to the foot of the staircase, and giving him a parting blow, said, "If ever I hear you say '*thee*' or '*thou*' to me again, I will strike the teeth down your throat." Thomas was greatly grieved to hear his father utter these passionate words; and turning to him, he calmly said, "Would it not be just for God to serve thee so, when thou sayest thee or thou to him?" His father's hand was up to strike him again, yet it sunk, and his countenance changed at these words, so that he turned away. Then Thomas went up into his chamber and prayed to the Lord, earnestly beseeching him that he would be pleased to open his father's eyes, that he might see whom he fought against, and for what; and that he might be pleased to turn his heart.

For some time after this, Walter said nothing to Thomas, and gave him no occasion to speak

to him. But this calm was not of long duration, for there was another storm occurred soon after.

In his younger years, more especially while he lived in London, his father had been in the habit of attending the meetings of the Puritans, and had stored up a stock of Scripture knowledge. He sometimes, but not frequently, caused his family to come together on First-day evening to hear him expound a chapter and pray. The family was now very small. His wife and oldest son were both dead; his eldest daughter was in London, and, he kept but two servants. It so happened that one First-day evening, he bid his daughter, who sat in the parlour with him, call the servants into prayer.

Perhaps this was intended as a trial to Thomas; at any rate, it proved one; for the servants loving their young master, did not go in until they were sent for a second time. This offended Walter; and when they went in, instead of going on with the evening exercises, he asked them why they had not come in at first:—and the excuse they gave only heightened his displeasure. He said, “Call in that fellow,” (meaning his son,) “he is the cause of all this.” The servants hesitated to obey; for they were sure the blame

would all fall upon him. But Thomas hearing his father, went in without waiting for them. His father showered cut reproaches against him, using sharp and bitter expressions ; until Thomas was induced to say, "They that can pray with such a spirit, let them ; for my part I cannot."

This so enraged Walter, that he not only struck him with his fists, but, getting his cane, he struck him with it so violently, that Thomas raised his arms to protect his head from the blows. The man-servant then stept in between them ; and, catching the cane in his hand, held it fast ; which made the father still more angry, if possible. Thomas perceiving this, bade the man let go his hold, and go away ; in doing which, as he turned he received a blow on his own shoulders. But now the sister interfered ; and, begging her father to forbear, she declared if he did not, she would throw open the casement, and call for help ; for indeed she was afraid he would murder her brother. This stopt his arm ; and after some threatening speeches, he told Thomas to go to his chamber ; whither he always sent him, when displeased. His sister followed him and dressed his arm, which was much bruised and swollen, and the skin was broken in several

places. Yet he felt that peace and quiet in his own mind which far overbalanced all his sufferings. His father, too, seemed to have exhausted himself in this last burst of passion, for he never treated him so severely again.

His oldest sister returned from London soon after this, and her love for Thomas induced her to pity rather than despise him, though she had imbibed a great dislike for the Quakers generally. The winter passed away slowly as it seemed to Thomas, who was taking his first lessons in the school of affliction ; but spring had some consolation in store for him, in the shape of a visit from his friends, Isaac and Mary Pennington. His father had a great regard for the latter, with whom he had been so well acquainted when she bore the name of Lady Springett. In conversation with her after her husband and she had joined Friends, but before Thomas Ellwood had, she told him how cruelly Isaac's father had used him because he would not pull off his hat. This Walter seemed surprised to hear, and condemned, as not only wicked but absurd. He little thought how soon he would imitate the conduct he professed so heartily to despise. Mary reminded him of this, and tried by every means in her power

to soften his displeasure towards his son. It availed but little, however, and seeing how very uncomfortable the son seemed, she begged he might be permitted to return home with her. This Walter resisted as long as he could ; being unwilling probably to have his son go with Quakers : but at last consented to the proposal if Thomas wished it. Thomas was very willing to go, but he had no hat ; and being about to get into the coach without one, his sister whispered to her father, asking if she might not get one for him. He told her she might ; while she ran into the house to get it, he conversed with Isaac and Mary, who were already seated ; but when he saw the sister coming with the hat, he took leave of them abruptly, and went in, fearing the hat would be put on before him.

Thomas was not allowed any money to take with him, and his father had taken from him all that would do to sell. But he was going among kind friends, and needed nothing they did not provide for him. He stayed six or seven weeks very happily at the Grange, which was the name of the place upon which the Penningtons lived ; and then feeling it would be right, Thomas concluded to return to his own home again.

When he arrived there his father treated him more kindly, although Thomas persisted in wearing his hat even at the table. Indeed Walter was wearied out with opposition, and after this avoided seeing Thomas as much as possible, though he treated him more respectfully when forced to notice him. One reason of this may have been, that if he should ever wish to sell his estate, (which seemed likely,) his son's consent would be necessary. He also intended going up to London; and as Thomas would be left at home, they would not meet for a long time. So he was permitted to make just such use of his time as pleased him best; and he spent a great deal of it in going to meetings. But he had no horse to ride, and often waded ankle deep in the mud. His father once or twice tried to lock the doors, so that he should not go out, but there was generally a back way unguarded, so that he could slip off without any words passing between them. His sisters were very kind to him, and though they could not think as he did, they saw he was sincere, and they endeavored to mitigate their father's anger as much as possible.

After his father and sisters went up to London, which they did when Thomas was about

twenty-two years old,—leaving him at the old house with no one but the housekeeper,—he was taken with the small-pox, which he had very badly indeed. When the Friends heard of it, they sent a nurse to take care of him. Under her care he soon got better, but was not able to go out for a long time. Feeling very lonely, he commenced a course of reading in order to occupy his mind until he could go out of the house; but his sight being very weak from his late illness, he soon impaired it so much, that he was forced to give up his studies. No sooner was he able than he hastened to Isaac Pennington's, and here he became more sensible of his want of general information than he had ever been before.

The society Thomas met with at Isaac Pennington's soon occasioned him to feel his own deficiency; and, speaking earnestly upon this subject to Isaac, he offered him all the assistance in his power. He was acquainted with an eminent physician in London, named Paget; and Dr. Paget was a friend of John Milton. Milton's sight was entirely gone; and he usually employed a person, generally a gentleman's son, to read to him. This was the situation that Isaac

Pennington wished for Thomas Ellwood ; knowing that Milton had access to the best works which were published, and that his comments and remarks would be very useful in forming a young person's taste. This was procured by the mediation of Dr. Paget, and Thomas, going up to London, availed himself of it, by reading aloud to Milton certain hours every day. In order to support himself, he dismissed the servant, and sold all the provision left in the house.

Milton perceiving Thomas's earnest desire to learn, gave him much encouragement and assistance, and taught him the proper pronunciation of his Latin words. He had a very quick ear, and could tell by the tone whether his pupil understood what he was reading ; and if he did not, would stop him and explain the difficult passages. In this way Thomas went on for some time, studying in the forenoon, and reading to Milton in the afternoon. But his health, probably not yet fully established after his illness, gave way, and he was obliged to leave town just as he was becoming sensible of some improvement. He went into the country, where he remained some time and was very ill ; but by nursing and care, he recovered again. His fa-

ther sent him enough money to pay the expenses of his illness.

As soon as he was well enough, he resumed his attendance on Milton, who was very glad to receive him. Scarcely was he at his learning again, before he, and many other Friends were taken up on a pretended suspicion of being concerned in a plot against the government. They were kept in prison several months, but not under a very rigid treatment ; for they were often allowed to absent themselves for a day or two, giving their words to be back at an appointed time.

This shows that, with all their prejudices against Friends, the officers of government placed dependence upon their words. Indeed, it often happened that a jailer, finding it inconvenient to accompany his prisoners from one jail to another, would start them off by themselves ; merely requiring their promise that they would be at the place at the appointed time, if nothing prevented ; and to their honor be it said, this confidence, we have reason to think, was never abused.

After Thomas Ellwood was discharged from prison, which he was without question or trial, he waited upon Milton again, but thought it

better not to recommence his reading until he saw Isaac Pennington.

Isaac was in poor health, so that he was confined to his chamber; and being very anxious about his children, he asked Thomas if he would take charge of their education until another teacher could be procured. To this plan Thomas consented, being unwilling to refuse so small a favor to one who had so often stood his friend; and he soon found he was improving himself as fast by teaching the children, as he could have done, even under Milton's tuition. Isaac Pennington appearing to be well satisfied, Thomas continued with the family, as tutor to his children, for seven years; indeed, until he married.

While at the Grange, his father came down to see the Penningtons, and he behaved very civilly to Thomas, inviting him to London, to see his sisters, who were both married and had settled there. Thomas accordingly went, and stayed a short time with them; but returned again to the Penningtons, who had their share of hardship. The family was entirely broken up at one time;—Isaac in one prison,—Thomas in another, and the other members all scattered. When this persecution passed over, how happy did they feel to meet in their own pleasant home

again—father, mother, children, and friends, all together once more.

Gulielma Springett was a very lovely young woman ; and a great many persons who admired her, would have liked to marry her. But she refused one proposal of the kind after another, until some of them said, it must be because she intended to marry Thomas Ellwood, who was always there, and had every opportunity of pleading his cause. Thomas admitted that he did admire her very much indeed ; but he thought such a marriage would not be agreeable to her mother, and he felt bound in honor not to attempt to create any other interest in her bosom, but that which might be felt by a dear and gentle sister.

In sixteen hundred and sixty-five, a great pestilence broke out in London. It was called the *Plague*, and many thousands died of it. All who had the means left the city ; and among the rest, John Milton, who wrote to Thomas Ellwood to procure him a lodging in the country ; which he did. After Milton was settled in his new home, Thomas called on him ; and before he left, Milton gave him a manuscript to look over, desiring his opinion. On returning it, Thomas told him he admired it very much indeed. It was called “*Paradise Lost* ;” and the

world has since confirmed Thomas's judgment. In giving it back, he said pleasantly to its author, "Thou hast said a great deal about *Paradise lost*, canst thou not tell us something of *Paradise found*?" Milton paused, and did not answer him; but turned the conversation on another subject. Some months after Milton had gone back to London, Thomas happening to be in town, waited upon him; and Milton, showing him the manuscript of "*Paradise Regained*," said pleasantly, "This is owing to you; for you put it into my head by the question you asked, when at Chalfont. I had not thought of it before."

Walter Ellwood, wishing to break the entail on his estate, was obliged to request his son's concurrence, as the place could not be sold without his consent. Thomas, happy to oblige his father, whenever he could do so without compromising his religious principles, cheerfully acceded to his proposal; though well aware that it would cut him off from all share or right in his father's property. But his own exertions would supply him with all that was needful; and he had learned to forego superfluities.

Thomas Ellwood had always regarded marriage as a divine institution, and he held it wrong

to look upon it in any exclusive worldly point of view. When he first felt his affections drawn towards Mary Ellis, a young woman whom he had known for several years, and whom he married, he prayed for divine counsel and guidance in this important concern. On mentioning the matter to her, he desired no answer until she, too, had waited upon the Lord for direction. On obtaining her consent, he informed his father, who appeared to be much pleased with the prospect, though Mary was a Friend. He offered to settle a sum of money on Thomas; which, however, he never did. On the contrary, Thomas, who knew his father well, thought it necessary to have papers drawn up and signed the next day after the marriage, securing to his wife all the money and lands she had possessed, as well as the little he had made, that he might not leave her at the mercy of his father.

And now we are nearly done; for his after-history is but the common history of the other early Friends. Fines and imprisonments, imprisonments and fines, were lavishly dealt out to them all. In Thomas's case, these dark moments were illuminated by intervals of rare happiness at home, where his wife fully justified his love and esteem.

He wrote and published many works, suitable for the times, but mostly now become obsolete. Several of them were answers to the attacks which Friends received at all quarters from priests and others. He spake in meetings for worship but seldom, in meetings for discipline frequently. He lived to be eighty-two years old, when he was taken with palsy, which deprived him of the use of his limbs, but left his mind clear and unclouded. He bore the pains of sickness with patient resignation, and a short time before he departed, uttered the words, "I am full of joy and peace. My soul is filled with joy."

It is no real cause of mourning for an infant to be taken away from the earth before its purity has been sullied; but it is glorious for the strong man, full of years, who has been tried and tempted, and resisted temptation, who has "fought the good fight," who has "kept the faith," to lay his head upon his dying pillow, saying, "Henceforward there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

